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fill the plain stand reverently as though waiting for the marvel, but the conspicuous figures enjoy themselves like guests at a fête champêtre.

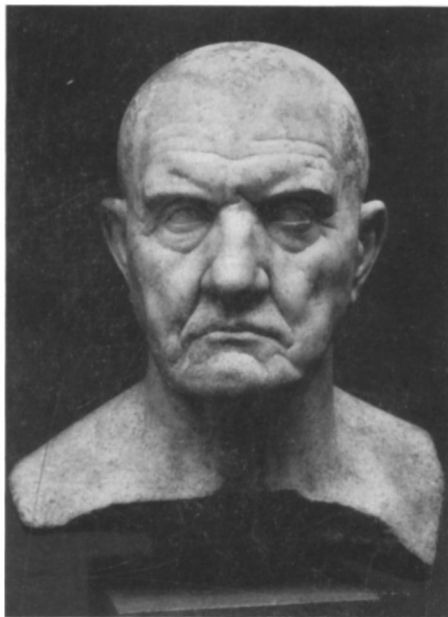
It is a characteristic Venetian interpretation of the story of the multitude that Christ compassionated, fearing that were they sent away without food they would faint on the way, as they had been following him for three days. The picture of the miracle is a splendid pageant, glorifying the ostentation of gorgeous costumes and the pride of young women in their exuberant beauty and health. The boy who holds the bread up to Christ struggles under the weight of the few small loaves as though they were the wherewithal for a lordly banquet, typifying in his attitude, it may be, the power of the miracle in that he carries the food which will satisfy so many thousands.

The impetuosity and swiftness of the painting (it must have been done in a couple of days), its invigorating spontaneity, the sensuous color, the aristocracy and pride of the people, all the greatest qualities of the picture, in fact, remove it from the story which was its starting-point, or the sacramental associations which early artists gave to the subject. But a successful work of art has no faults. Our picture, though it lacks the significance of the sacred narratives of the miracle, gives instead a gracious and noble vision of a Venetian holiday out of doors, as the "most daring painter in the world" imagined it, and taken as such it leaves nothing to be desired.

B. B.

A ROMAN PORTRAIT BUST

AMONG the more important acquisitions that the Museum has made recently is the Roman bust which is reproduced in the accompanying illustrations. It was purchased of a dealer in the latter part of 1912, and is now exhibited at the top of the main staircase. The place is one of especial distinction, but the bust will be found quite worthy of it, as it is one of the finest pieces of sculpture which the Museum has yet purchased, a splendid example of Roman portraiture at its best, and in a remarkably brilliant state of preservation, the head itself having suffered no damage whatever.



ROMAN PORTRAIT BUST

The subject is unknown and we have no clue to his identity, but the style of the modelling and the shape of the bust enable us to fix his date approximately in the last years of the Republic or the beginning of the Empire; in other words, we may presume that he was a contemporary of Julius Caesar and Augustus. Certainly he was a typical Old Roman in the best sense of the term, a man of strong and rather grim personality, indomitable will, and high intelligence, whose life had been given to serious affairs, and who had been a power in those affairs, whether they were of business or of state.

In the manner in which these traits have been reproduced by the sculptor we have an admirable illustration of the characteristics that distinguished the Roman portraitists of that period from their Greek predecessors, who could not resist the

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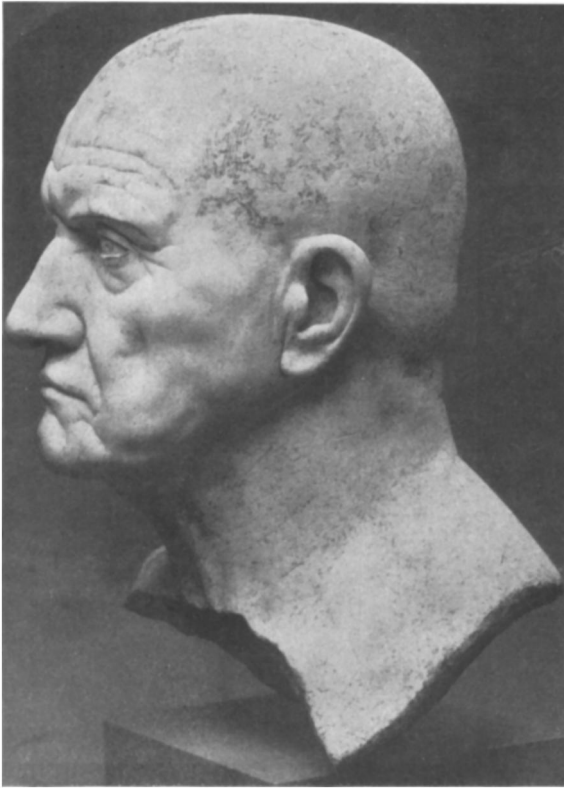
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ROMAN PORTRAIT BUST

tendency to idealize their subjects. In this head, however, as in other portraits of the time, the aim was to represent the subject precisely as he looked, yet to do this in a way that should portray his character as well as his physical appearance. From this point of view the head is a masterly piece of modelling, for with all the minuteness of detail with which the face is rendered, the inner nature of the man is no less forcibly expressed, and thus the work has a quality seldom attained by modern realists.

One peculiarity in the execution of the bust should be noticed. Judging from a photograph or illustration, it might be supposed that the head is entirely bald. Such, however, is not the case. The line of the hair is clearly marked by a slight elevation around the face and neck, and the surface bounded by this line all over the skull is finely rasped. The lines of this rasping show no resemblance to hair and are certainly not intended to represent it. How, then, was the hair represented? It is inconceivable that the face, neck, and ears should have been finished in such detail as they are and the rest of the head treated with entire indifference, and the only inference seems to be that the rasping was the sculptor's preparation for a coating of either stucco or color. To be sure, this explanation is not based upon anything we know of the principles of Roman sculpture — except that color did play a part in it — and it is supported only by such evidence as we have here; but other Roman portraits show the same treatment of the skull, and these

are usually described as bald, though they bear the same indications as ours that they were not intended to be left so.¹ E.R.

IMPORTANT EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN SILVER

Up to now the Museum has depended chiefly upon the loans of several generous collectors of European and American silver for the illustration in the Museum of this attractive branch of the decorative arts. Recognizing, however, the desirability of an extensive permanent collection of such material, the Museum has recently purchased the Hon. Charles H. Truax Collection and the European section of the collection formed by Mr. George S. Palmer. Both collections have been for some years on exhibition in the Museum as loans and are well known to the students and amateurs of old plate.

The Palmer Collection consists of two hundred and thirty pieces, of which considerably

more than half are English, principally of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The proportion is approximately the same in the Truax Collection of one hundred and nine pieces. The latter collection includes the few American examples among the new accessions. In point of date the earliest pieces in the combined collections are four spoons (Fig. 6) in the Palmer Collection, with a design



FIG. 1. CHALICE, GERMAN, XV CENTURY

¹For examples of these see Arndt's *Griechische und römische Porträts*, Nos. 196, 197-8, 199-200, 204, 833-4, and most of the so-called "Scipio" heads.